



Committed to the future of rural communities.

NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture - Rural Development
World Wide Web: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov>

NEW HAMPSHIRE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 31, 2006

Contact: Carolyn Lawrence
(802) 828-6002

USDA RURAL DEVELOPMENT GRANT CONTINUES TO SUPPORT NH ENTREPRENEURS

Montpelier, VT: Hannah Grimes Marketplace (HGM) Development received a \$50,712 USDA Rural Development (RD) Rural Business Enterprise Grant to continue a pilot program started in 2004 with RD funds, offering education and technical assistance to entrepreneurs who are starting or growing their businesses.

The grant was presented to Mary Ann Kristiansen, Executive Director of HGM, by Congressman Charles Bass and USDA Rural Development Administrator Russell Davis. "The funding of Hannah Grimes Marketplace supports diversified community and economic development in the region," said Congressman Bass. "Locally-owned businesses are the backbone of a thriving economy."

This program has grown in participation from 5 businesses when it started in 2004 to 34 businesses in 2006. The curriculum addresses problem solving, marketing and general support. Businesses can receive training via one of three methods: Group I offers three private hour-long sessions with a business coach each month and a monthly group meeting; Group II meets monthly with a business coach as a group; and Group III has attendees participate in a series of monthly workshops, less personalized than Groups I and II. "New Hampshire is a state of small businesses," said Davis. "Support of that sector is critical to its economic success. The 'creative economy' clearly has a foundation in Southwest NH. RD is proud to foster this sector's health through financing for business development."

Hannah Grimes Marketplace Development was founded in 1997, and over the last nine years has created a successful model of economic development that creates jobs and economic vitality by building on the region's heritage, arts, culture, natural and human resources, creativity, and entrepreneurial spirit. HGM has developed a host of successful programs and services that have proven that jobs and economic development do not necessitate a trade-off with a way of life, wise land use, or environmental protection. Accepting the ceremonial check, Kristiansen said, "For us, funding from RD has allowed us to develop a solid curriculum for entrepreneurs that makes a difference."

USDA Rural Development's mission is to increase economic opportunity and improve the quality of life in Rural America. This is done by providing financial and technical assistance to foster growth and new opportunities for business development, home ownership, and critical community and technology infrastructure. To learn more about USDA Rural Development programs visit the web site at <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/vt>.